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HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF

RINALDO AND ARMIDA,

A

BALLET D'ACTION,

OR

DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION;

Composed by

MONSIEUR NOVERRE,

AND

Translated from the Original French

BY

PARKYNS MAC MAHON.

Per ritenere il cavalier diletto
Prega e piange la maga, egli al fin vassi.
Essa, per vendicare il suo gran duolo,
Strugge il palagio, e va per aria a volo.
TASSO'S JERUSALEM, Delivered.

LONDON:
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TO THE

Ladies of Great-Britain:

THE

DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION

OF

RINALDO AND ARMIDA,

IS,

MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THE

AUTHOR and *TRANSLATOR.*

Preliminary Diſcourſe.

THE ſubject of the following Ballet, or rather dramatic repreſentation, is taken from TASSO's JERUSALEM, a poem which reflects immortal honor on the author, and on Italy that gave him birth. By taking my ſubject from ſo plentiful a ſource, I have the advantage of laying before the public, an event which is perfectly known, and to the truth of hiſtory joins the illuſion of magic charms. I readily acknowledge that my model is above imitation. How can the mute expreſſion of pantomime, do juſtice to that beautiful ſtyle, thoſe noble compariſons, that ſublime eloquence which are the excluſive privilege of poetry alone? it would be unjuſt to look for perfection in an art, which is as it were, hardly

hardly out of its cradle, and ſpeaks as yet in broken accents. Let the indulgence of the Public, the enlightened Encourager of all the arts, ſupply the defect. If my plan be injudiciouſly choſen, if my endeavours prove fruitleſs, and cannot meet with their approbation, I ſhall comfort myſelf with the conſciouſneſs of having done the beſt I could. It requires ſome time to ſtudy the taſte of the Public; that time, which I would eſteem the happieſt part of my life, has been but ſhort: three months are not ſufficient to pleaſe at once ſenſations diametrically oppoſite; it is impoſſible within that ſpace to tune to the uniſon, ſo many jarring ſtrings wound up by different paſſions. In order to reach that almoſt unattainable harmony, the artiſt ſhould be acquainted with the various inclinations of individuals, he muſt crowd in the ſame picture all the different compoſitions, and employ all the variegated tints which diverſify the taſte and inclinations of each ſpectator: In ſhort,

he

melt her down to ſoft pity: Her throbbing heart which breathed nought but revenge, now beats to love alone. With garlands of flowers ſhe encircles Rinaldo, and carries him off to her palace!

SCENE II.

The magnificent gardens in Armida's *palace.*

THE Princeſs and Rinaldo are diſcovered ſurrounded by the moſt raviſhing objects, the Pleaſures, Graces, Cupid, and a crowd of fortunate lovers compoſe their train, and by their attitudes and actions expreſs their felicity. This enchanting ſpectacle makes the deepeſt impreſſion on the heart of our young warrior, the love of glory vaniſhes, he now prefers the roſes of Venus to the laurels of Pallas;

Pallas; the Nymphs adorn him with flowers, and crown him with myrtle. Rinaldo falls at Armida's feet, and the two lovers, after having expreſſed by their action, their mutual happineſs, retire with their train, to enjoy the ſport of the fields.

Ubaldo and the *Daniſh* Knight, having, by means of a golden wand, ſurmounted all the obſtacles that the magic art had raiſed in their way, enter the garden. Beautiful Nymphs, headed by Clorinda, prevent their going further, bid them forego all thoughts of glory, and give themſelves up to the pleaſures of love. Cupid and the Graces ſurround Ubaldo, who oppoſing but a weak reſiſtance, ſeems inclined to follow the ſeducing objects: He is almoſt overpowered, when the *Daniſh* Knight wreſting the wand from the feeble hands of his yielding companion, waves it in the air, and the enchantment diſappears.

The

The two Knights purſue their ſearch, but are once more caught in Armida's ſnare; a Nymph under the form of Lucinda, the miſtreſs of the *Daniſh* Knight, accoſts him with all the ſeducing wantonneſs of love and deſire. It is now his turn to waver and delay. The feint Lucinda recalls to his mind his former vows, and bluſhingly confeſſes her impaſſionate regard for him. The Knight ſees, hears, and thinks of nothing but his beloved Lucinda. In vain does Ubaldo expoſtulate, and endeavours to bring him away; the *Daniſh* Knight is deaf to his remonſtrances. Lucinda bids him follow her; but at this critical inſtant Ubaldo, in his turn, waves the wand, and the falſe Lucinda diſappears; the illuſion is no more, and the *Daniſh* Knight aſhamed of his weakneſs, retires with Ubaldo, blaming himſelf for his fooliſh credulity, when they are once more delayed by a troop of Demons, whoſe efforts however to ſtop the Knights, are effectually defeated.

SCENE

SCENE III.

An apartment ſumptuouſly decorated within Armida's *palace.*

ARmida and her lover are ſeated on a rich ſopha, their brilliant and lovely train vie with each other in ſportive dances, and in various attitudes form themſelves into different groups round Rinaldo and Armida. This Princeſs holds in her hand a looking-glaſs, a gift of the God of love, ſhe admires the graceful and manly features of Rinaldo, reflected on the poliſhed glaſs. The young warrior contemplates in his turn, Armida's irreſiſtable charms, their eyes meet and confeſs the approaching bliſs. The Princeſs of *Damaſcus* has exhauſted all that art and coquetry can deviſe to ſet off her natural charms, and Rinaldo by his action, expreſſes his heart-felt ſatisfaction.

But

But now the hour is come when Armida muſt attend to finiſh thoſe ſpells, which are intended to ſecure Rinaldo's affection; ſhe leaves him—yet, tho' only for a moment, can either bear the idea of being aſunder, her abſence gives to Rinaldo the deepeſt concern; grief and melancholy o'erclouds his manly brow.

Ubaldo and the *Daniſh* Knight, who have been at a diſtance, eye-witneſſes of what has paſs'd, make up to Rinaldo at this unexpected ſight, he looks confuſed and abaſhed. Ubaldo holds up to him the enchanted ſhield. No ſooner does the young hero caſt his eyes on this faithful mirror, whoſe peculiar uſe is to ſhow vice and weakneſs in their natural deformity, than he ſtarts back with ſhame and horror, the ſight of his effeminate accoutrement inflames him with wrath, he tears his apparel, ſtamps on his crown, plucks off the garlands of flowers, and diveſts himſelf of thoſe childiſh ornaments and inglorious garments.

The *Daniſh* Knight improving the opportunity, brandiſhes before him the arms which he has brought, Rinaldo ſeizes on them in a kind of extatic tranſport, he deeply regrets the time he has ſtolen from glory, honour, and duty, to beſtow it on idleneſs and effeminacy. He embraces the two Knights, entreating them to tear him from a ſpot where his virtue might encounter new dangers.

They all three prepare to ſet out, when Armida, who by her art had forſeen her impending misfortune, enters with the greateſt precipitancy. Rinaldo dreading the powerful charms of the Magician, dares not lift up his eyes. She loads him with reproaches, then has recourſe to entreaties, and at laſt embraces the knees of her ſtern conqueror. Rinaldo wavering between love and glory, oppoſes but a weak reſiſtance to this laſt attack. But his friends aſhamed at his want of courage, endeavour to inſpire him with thoughts more

more worthy of a hero. They force him from the arms of Armida, of whom he takes the moſt affectionate farewell. The love-ſick Princeſs unable to ſupport the torturing idea of parting for ever with the man whom ſhe holds moſt dear, falls ſenſeleſs in the arms of her women. Rinaldo wounded to the heart, cannot reſiſt the impulſe of his love, diſengaged from his friends, he flies towards Armida, in an inſtant is at her feet, lays hold of her hands, bedews them with his faſt flowing tears, and endeavours in vain to recall her to life. The two Knights offended at Rinaldo's returning weakneſs, preſent before him once more, the truth-diſcloſing mirror, and force him away. Rinaldo's departure is marked with all the impaſſionate regrets of an heart deeply affected, of a lover who ſacrifices inclination to obey the calls of glory. The hero retires with ſlow ſteps, his eyes conſtantly fixed upon Armida, and expreſſing the exceſs of grief and deſpair, which tears his inmoſt ſoul.

Armida at laſt opens her beauteous eyes, but alas, how hateful that light which confirms her misfortune, and diſcloſes to her the flight of the inconſtant Rinaldo; in vain ſhe calls to him, in vain ſhe breaks out in the moſt paſſionate yet tender reproaches, her lover can hear her no more: provoked at the irreparable loſs, ſhe gives way to thoſe ſentiments which deſpairing love alone inſpires. She calls to her aſſiſtance the hell-born Deities of Hate, Fury, and Revenge; ſubmiſſive and obedient, the infernal powers obey her ſummons. The Princeſs breaks to pieces the quiver and arrows of the God of love, tears off his bandage, and wreſting from the Goddeſs of Revenge, her flaming torch, ſets fire to her own palace; the thunder roars, ſwift lightning flaſhes through the clouds, a river of fire iſſuing from the mouths of two frightful dragons, rolls along with the utmoſt impetuoſity, ſome of the Demons precipitate themſelves into the burning fluid, others

ſink

ſink into the fiery abyſs, and that ſpot which was before, the abode of enchanted Beings under the moſt pleaſing forms, now becomes the dreary manſion of wild beaſts and ſhapeleſs monſters.

FINIS.

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